



# USS Hartford (SSN 768)

Commander Naval Submarine Forces  
Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet

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## CDR Christopher R. Van Metre Commanding Officer

Commander Van Metre graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering and was commissioned through the NROTC program.

Following graduation, he completed nuclear power training and the Submarine Officer Basic Course prior to assignment aboard USS L. MENDEL RIVERS (SSN 686). During his tour he served as Electrical Officer, Chemistry and Radiological Controls Assistant, Damage Control Assistant, and Communications Officer as RIVERS completed three North Atlantic deployments.

In May 1990, Commander Van Metre reported as an NROTC Instructor at Tulane University in New Orleans, LA. Upon completion of this tour, Commander Van Metre attended the Submarine Officer Advanced Course and reported to USS OMAHA (SSN 692) as Navigator where he completed a deployment to the Western Pacific. He subsequently relieved as engineer officer in OMAHA and served in this capacity through decommissioning in 1995.

Commander Van Metre reported in November 1995 as the submarine warfare officer on the staff of Commander, Naval Doctrine Command in Norfolk, VA. Commander Van Metre then served as executive officer in USS RHODE ISLAND (SSBN 740)(GOLD) from May 1998 to April 2000, completing three strategic deterrent patrols. Following this tour, he was assigned as Director of Nuclear Power School in Charleston, SC.

Commander Van Metre has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal, and various unit awards.

Commander Van Metre is married to Rosemary McEwan of Charleston, SC. They have three children, Brian, Ashleigh and Regan.

## ***Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead***

The submarine Hartford is the second U.S. Naval vessel to be named in honor of Hartford. The first USS Hartford had a long distinguished career. She was a steam and sail-powered sloop of war commissioned in June 1859. She was designed to engage the world's most modern and capable warships in the high seas.

On her first deployment, she sailed the Far Eastern waters of Hong Kong and China as the American flagship of the East India Squadron. After the outbreak of the Civil War, USS Hartford was ordered home and became flagship of the Western Gulf of Mexico Blockading Squadron under Admiral David Farragut. She participated in many naval actions including the battle of Vicksburg and capture of New Orleans. During his campaign to deny the South the use of the Gulf of Mexico, Admiral Farragut turned the tide of battle at Mobile Bay with his famous order, "Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead."

Following the Civil War, USS Hartford visited many ports around the world attracting thousands of visitors including the royalty of Europe. These visits to foreign ports were usually accompanied by great celebrations in honor of USS Hartford's historical significance. Thereafter she was used as a training vessel until her final decommissioning in 1926.

The original USS Hartford has a unique place in U.S. history. Admiral Farragut and USS Hartford have been widely credited with providing the decisive victory that deterred foreign powers from taking an active role in the Civil War.

## ***Facts and Figures***

- **Builders:** Newport News Shipbuilding Co.; General Dynamics Electric Boat Division
- **Powerplant:** One nuclear reactor, one shaft
- **Length:** 360 feet (109.73 meters)
- **Beam:** 33 feet (10.06 meters)
- **Displacement:** Approx. 6,900 tons (7010.73 metric tons) submerged
- **Speed:** 20+ knots (23+ miles per hour; 36.8+ KPH)
- **Crew:** 13 officers, 121 enlisted
- **Armament:** Tomahawk cruise missiles, VLS tubes (719 and later), MK48 torpedoes, four torpedo tubes